The Six-Year-Old Parliament

A HANDBOOK

FOR

CANDIDATES AND ELECTORS.

LONDON
PRINTRD BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

THE

SIX-YEAR-OLD PARLIAMENT

AND

ITS APPROACHING DISSOLUTION.

A HANDBOOK FOR CANDIDATES AND ELECTORS.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.
1865.

PREFACE.

THE greater portion of this Pamphlet is a republication, by permission, of an article which appeared in the 'Edinburgh Review' for October 1864, under the title of 'The Five-Year-Old Parliament.' It has been extended to embrace the principal events of the present Session, and some observations have been added applicable to the coming General Election.

PAGE

Why the Country should Support the Liberal Party . . 61

Character and Constitution of the Liberal and Conservative Parties 62

Questions of our Time, and Position of the Two Parties in respect to them 63

Alleged Claims of Conservatives to Power . . . 70

Their Conduct in Office 74

Their Conduct in Opposition 76

Issue now before the Country 78

THE

SIX-YEAR-OLD PARLIAMENT.

THE PARLIAMENT which will shortly conclude its seventh Session was elected in May 1859, under the auspices of the Derby-Disraeli Administration, in answer to an almost personal appeal made by those Ministers to the country. We say a personal appeal, because, as at a former election, the great object of the Conservative Government, as of the Conservative party, appeared to be to clear itself of its antecedents and its character, and, if possible, to divest itself of its identity. Only in 1859, more prudent than in 1852, while breaking with the past, it committed itself to no promises for the future. On the hustings in 1859, the members and supporters of Lord Derby's Government abjured its recent Reform Bill; they professed no financial policy, for, scared by the failure of Lord Ellenborough's India Bill, Mr. Disraeli had contented himself with a budget that was confessedly a makeshift. Their foreign policy was avowedly one of peace and of neutrality; but peace had in

the South of Europe turned to war, and their neutrality was suspected of Austrian tendencies.

The Parliament returned by the country in answer to the appeal so made, at once, by a majority of thirteen, pronounced a vote of want of confidence in those who had summoned it, and installed their opponents in power. After a trial of five years, it solemnly ratified, on the occasion of the Dano-German debate, by a majority of eighteen, the verdict it had given in 1859. It remains for the country to say whether the House of Commons has been justified in the support it has so long given to Lord Palmerston's Government; and this will best appear from a brief survey of the policy it has approved, and of the measures it has sanctioned.

The Reform Bill condemned by the former Parliament, and still more decisively by the country, was a Reform Bill in no ordinary sense of the term. It disingenuously sought, not so much to amend the representation in accordance with the wants of the people, as to cut and carve it to suit the exigencies of the Conservative party. That Bill disfranchised a large body of the most independent electors in counties, namely, the forty-shilling freeholders voting for property within the limits of parliamentary boroughs. It admitted absentee freeholders to vote for boroughs, and proposed a suspicious revision of their boundaries.

The affirmation of Lord John Russell's resolutions defeated the manœuvre of the Tory leader; it preserved the integrity of the county constituencies, and saved the boroughs from faggot votes and a 'rectification of their frontiers' dangerous to independence. Lord Derby's successors did not fail, in accordance with promises given, to introduce in the present Parliament a Bill extending the suffrage both in counties and in towns, and providing for a redistribution of seats. That Bill fell to the ground, from want of support in the country. Neither electors nor non-electors evinced any active interest in the fate of the measure, but rather, as the result of Mr. Bright's Reform campaign in the preceding autumn had indicated, viewed the subject with, at all events, temporary indifference. Now, it is an undoubted fact that the Reform Act of 1832, the increasing power of the press, and the diffusion of education, have rendered Parliament more immediately responsive and responsible to the voice of the country. But, then, it can hardly be a just subject for complaint, if Parliament be found in a corresponding degree sensitive to the silence of the country. More especially is this result to be expected in the case of a reform in the representation. Such a measure necessarily clashes with many local and personal interests, while directly it offers no tangible advantage to the community

at large, but only satisfies a sense of right, or indirectly benefits those to whom the power of voting is extended.

The Conservatives, regardless of the fact that in two successive speeches from the Throne their Government had urged the importance and advantage of an early Reform, eagerly availed themselves of the forbearance of the country to repudiate those pledges, and have since laboured to close the door against all Reform, now and hereafter. The Liberals, on the contrary, have steadfastly upheld the principle of Reform. The debates on Mr. Locke King's and Mr. Baines's Bills, introduced rather as protests than with a serious hope of passing them into law, have served to display the spirit that animates political parties on this question. In 1864, more especially, the language held on the Conservative side of the House was tantamount to a declaration that those in possession of the suffrage, and satisfied with that condition of things, were, without further reason, justified in refusing the same right to those not equally fortunate with themselves. This climax of selfish exclusiveness called forth an indignant protest from so moderate a Reformer as Mr. Gladstone. In the course of a celebrated speech, he pointed out that such a refusal was a mere insult to the applicants for the franchise, and that although that privilege might be withheld from

the many, yet it must be, not on arbitrary, but on constitutional and reasonable grounds. Mr. Disraeli, conscious of the false principle to which his party had committed itself, made this year, in debate, a desperate effort to palliate its effect by hinting at a 'lateral extension' of the franchise; but this adoption of what American strategists term a 'crab-movement,' in contradistinction to the direct advance recommended by himself when in office, was received by his followers with an ominous silence, and treated by his opponents with an indifference which showed the want of confidence felt by both sides of the House in the Proteus of the Tory party. Mr. Disraeli has since issued a manifesto to the Buckinghamshire electors, which, from its mysterious character, might well pass for a stray leaf from the lost Sibylline books. In this remarkable document the writer, after making the bold assertion that the House of Commons has pronounced that 'the franchise in boroughs should not be lowered;' after advancing the astounding proposition that 'it has declared by a vast majority,' that 'the principle on which Lord Derby wished to extend the suffrage was the just one;' after describing reductions of the franchise, such as he himself once offered, as 'attacks upon the State,' concludes, amid denunciations of democracy, with a reservation of a loophole to himself through which to make 'attacks upon

the State' in any form, manner, or degree he may hereafter find opportune.

Apart, however, from this mystification by the Tory leader, the real issue between the Liberal and the Conservative parties has for some years been, and still remains, not simply whether the right of suffrage should, in the present condition of things, be measured by gross or by rateable value, by a few pounds more or less of rental; whether it should depend on personal as well as on real property, on education as well as on wealth; but whether the old English principle, that in any given state of society those who by their intelligence and position are qualified to exercise the suffrage wisely and independently should possess it, is still to be recognised and upheld; or whether, in opposition to the spirit of the constitution and the precedents of history, it shall be declared that the suffrage is to remain henceforth and for ever the exclusive privilege of those classes which happen at the present moment to be seised of it.

Our financial position has, in the course of the last six years, been converted from one of embarrassment, not to say distress, into one of high prosperity. Our armaments have, within the same period, at great cost, been increased in a degree corresponding to, and improved in a degree surpassing, the progress made by other nations. We have passed through the ordeals of bad

harvests and the crisis of Lancashire distress. Taxation has, nevertheless, been reduced; the burdens upon trade, upon agricultural and manufacturing industry, have been diminished; and England, at the present time, in the words of a Conservative statesman, 'is rich, is prosperous, is contented beyond all former example.' Such a condition of things is due, in the first instance, to the industry and good conduct of the people, and to the enterprise and intelligence of capitalists. But we hold that the present Parliament, by the prudence of its policy, and the wisdom of its legislation, by preserving peace, by securing us against danger from abroad and panic at home, and by striking shackles off industry and trade, has materially facilitated and contributed to the result.

The task Mr. Gladstone had before him on acceding to office was indeed an appalling one. Mr. Disraeli had met the difficulties caused by commercial distress in the autumn of 1857, and the increase in naval expenditure, by doing away with the war sinking fund, and postponing for four years the payment of 2,000,000*l.* of Exchequer Bonds. Not content with thus throwing upon the future his own immediate burdens, he had prepared further embarrassment for his successors by accepting Mr. M. Gibson's resolution in condemnation of the paper-duty. The newly-

elected Parliament found in consequence that it had to meet an estimated expenditure of 69,000,000*l.*, with an estimated revenue of only 64,000,000*l.*, while one of the chief sources of that revenue had been rendered untenable. In the following year the position was still more embarrassing. The heavy outlay caused by the revolution in armaments raised the estimated expenditure, notwithstanding the lapse of more than 2,000,000*l.* of Long Annuities, to the highest point ever reached in time of peace, to upwards of 70,000,000*l.* Later in the Session this enormous amount was increased by nearly 4,000,000*l.*, chiefly to defray the cost of the expedition to China. To crown all, the autumn brought a bad harvest, which directly reduced the produce of the duties upon malt and hops, and, indirectly by the distress created, injuriously affected the revenue derived from other sources, more especially from spirits. The despatch of troops to British North America towards the end of 1861 again gave rise to an extraordinary military expenditure. In this and in the following years the dearth of cotton paralysed the chief branch of manufacturing industry, while a succession of unfavourable seasons reduced the agricultural produce of Ireland by one-third.

The country was thus beset with difficulties from abroad, and afflicted with calamity at home.

Yet what is our financial condition now as compared with 1859? In 1859 the income-tax was 9*d.*, it is now 4*d.* in the pound: the commodities subject to Customs duties in 1859 were 419 in number; the Customs duties are now substantially confined to fourteen articles, upon all the most important of which the charges have been largely reduced. Allowing for new duties imposed, the relief given to the public by the abolition or reduction of Customs* between 1859 and the

	£	
* The gross Revenue of Customs in the year 1859 amounted to . . .	25,147,825	
in 1864 .	22,632,727	
The additions to the Revenue of Customs, by duties imposed or augmented, amounted in the interval to	600,170	per ann.
The remissions of Customs Revenue, by duties repealed or reduced, amounted in the same period to .	7,040,404	per ann.
The gross Revenue of Excise in the year 1859 amounted to . . .	18,480,572	
in 1864 .	20,061,000	
The additions to the Revenue of Excise, by duties imposed or augmented, amounted in the interval to . .	1,450,000	
The remissions of Excise Revenue, by duties repealed or reduced, amounted in the same period to . . .	1,446,000	

An increase in the same period of 18 per cent. in the annual value in the assessments of Schedules A, B, D, to the income-tax, affords a test of the advance of wealth in fixed property, in farming, and in trades and professions. It must also be remembered that relief as regards income-tax has been afforded to incomes under 200*l.* a year.

close of 1864, amounts in round numbers to 6,500,000*l.* a year; of these nearly 4,000,000*l.* were, in the last-named year, replaced to the Exchequer through the increased consumption of the few articles remaining subject to duty. Within the same period the excise upon paper and upon hops was abolished, and other changes were effected in duties of Inland Revenue, by which relief was given to the public of, in round numbers, 1,500,000*l.* a year; 1,400,000*l.* additional was imposed upon spirits, but another 1,400,000*l.* has been derived from the enlarged demand for articles under Excise. Nor is this all: the present year has witnessed further reductions in the duties upon tea and upon fire insurance; so that the total amount of indirect taxes remitted since 1859 exceeds 11,000,000*l.* a year, while the income-tax has been reduced by 7,500,000*l.* At the same time, the national debt, funded and unfunded, has been diminished by between 18,000,000*l.* and 19,000,000*l.* Notwithstanding the enormous reductions of the national burdens, Mr. Gladstone, after bringing the income of the country to a level with the expenditure, has been able, for now three years in succession, to meet Parliament with a surplus. On the 27th of April last, after proposing a remission of 3,778,000*l.* within the current year, he could anticipate a revenue of 66,400,000*l.*, and once

more look forward to an excess of receipts over outlay. If Swift's proposition be true, that in the arithmetic of taxation two and two make one, Mr. Gladstone may fairly claim to have proved that subtracting one from three makes four. After long and fierce opposition, embittered by personal attacks upon himself, the wisdom and the grandeur of his financial measures have been universally admitted. He stands forth confessedly the foremost of our Chancellors of the Exchequer, while England in his hands enjoys the singular distinction of being the only one among the Great Powers of the world whose outlay does not exceed its income. His brilliant success and the irrefragable testimony of facts have so completely silenced his adversaries, that in the present Session they allowed a bold and comprehensive budget to pass without challenge or dispute.

Notwithstanding the obstructions thrown in the way by the adherents of commercial restrictions, the treaty with France, the work of that great Englishman whose loss his own and foreign countries have so recently had occasion to deplore, was ratified in 1860. The political consequences of such a connection, which cannot fail to unite in closer bonds two nations whose alliance has ever been favourable to the best interests of civilisation, are more important than its commercial benefits. The latter, however, are directly perceived, and

admit of being arithmetically stated. In four years the value of our imports from France has increased by one-half; the value of British and Irish produce exported to France has doubled. During the three years preceding the treaty, the average annual value of the commerce between the two countries was 24,000,000*l.*; for the three following years it was 42,000,000*l.*, and last year approached to 50,000,000*l.* For our woollen*

	£
* Woollens exported to United States in 1859	4,502,651
1864	3,629.764
Difference .	872,887
Woollens exported to France in 1859 .	419,404
in 1864 .	1,659,803
Difference .	1,240,399
Silk manufactures imported from France in 1859	1,732,928
in 1864	4,948,585
British and Irish silk manufactures exported to France in 1859 . . .	44,039
in 1864 . . .	138,447
Wine imported from France in 1859 . .	597,000 gals.
in 1864 . .	1,965,000 gals.
Wine imported from countries other than France in 1859	5,567,000 gals.
in 1864	8,652,000 gals.
Value of imports of wine from all countries in 1859	£2,781,040
in 1864	£4,497,343

A remarkable proof of increased intercourse with France is afforded by the fact, that the number of letters passing between the United Kingdom and France was 33 per cent. greater in 1863 than in 1859.

manufactures alone a market has been opened which has more than counterbalanced the loss to our trade in that staple, great as it was, to America. The increase in our exports is not, however, confined to a few articles, or such as might be the result of an accidental demand. It is one which is participated in, almost without exception, by all the commodities we send to France. Similarly, nearly every article we import from France exhibits an increase, and few more so than silk and wine, the consumption of which always affords a good criterion of the prosperity of the country and the improved condition of the people. The high duties maintained throughout the last century on foreign, and more especially on French wines, encouraged adulteration, and vitiated the national taste, to a degree that led Smollett to complain, in 'Humphrey Clinker,' that 'there is no nation that drinks so hoggishly as the English. What passes for wine among us is not the juice of the grape; it is an adulterous mixture brewed up of nauseous ingredients, by dunces, who are bunglers in the art of poison-making; yet we and our forefathers are, and have been, poisoned by this cursed drench, without taste or flavour.' The colonial wines, to the consumption of which a premium was given by the legislation of this century, were scarcely an improvement on the liquors thus described.

The reduction of duties on foreign wines in consequence of the French treaty, had the immediate effect not only of increasing consumption, but of substituting genuine wine for more pernicious beverages. The importations of French wines have already more than trebled, while the absolute increase in those from Spain, Portugal, and other countries has even exceeded that in wines derived from France. The example of France is being followed by other countries, till the commercial policy of England bids fair to become the commercial policy of the world. Treaties have been concluded with Belgium and with Italy, destined, we hope, to yield fruit no less rich than that with France.* Prussia and the Zollverein are taking their first steps in the direction of Free Trade. Sweden is pursuing the same course; and it may be hoped that the mission of the Vice-President of the Board of Trade to Vienna may make an impression even on the stubbornness of Austrian protectionists. By amicable negotiations with Foreign Powers, the abolition of the Stade Dues and of the Scheldt Tolls—exactions in an especial degree injurious to British interests—has been secured.

	£
* Value of the trade of the United Kingdom with Belgium in the year preceding the treaty, viz., 1861	8,732,159
1864	12,435,317

Altogether, incredible as it may seem, the annual value of the trade of the United Kingdom, which in 1858 was 300,000,000*l.*, rose in 1864 to 487,000,000*l.*; and if we add this to the precious metals imported and exported in the same year, the total value of the trade of the year amounts to 520,000,000*l.*; figures which, like the computations of astronomical distances, are of such a magnitude that the mind scarcely realises the idea they convey.

The treaty of 1862 between Great Britain and the United States settled the difficulties that had long attended the Right of Search in a manner honourable and satisfactory to both countries, and rendered more effectual the means for the suppression of the Slave Trade. Nor must we omit to mention another treaty presented to this Parliament—that concluded with Denmark as a preliminary to the marriage of the heir to the throne. The unanimity with which the House of Commons voted the proposed allowance for the establishment of the Prince and Princess of Wales, marked its approbation of a royal alliance founded, not upon state interests or with political views, but upon the higher and purer considerations of mutual affection and the hope of domestic happiness.

Unfortunately, all our relations with foreign countries have not been those of trade and of

friendship. The struggle of nationalities against established empires has of late years kept the European Continent in a state of fermentation. England has been more than once divided in feeling between her love of order and respect for treaties, and her sympathy with people striving for freedom and for unity. The Liberal party in Parliament has, however, steadily kept in view a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries; and in international disputes, without attempting an impossible isolation, has never forgotten that the blood of England's sons is not to be lightly shed by her rulers for causes in which England's honour and England's interests are not directly engaged. This temperate conduct may not command the same momentary applause as a more high-handed course; but, where its motives are above the possibility of misconstruction, it cannot fail, in the long run, to carry weight and command respect. France gathered laurels in Italy, and enjoyed for a time paramount ascendency in the Peninsula. Yet the Italian policy of neutral England has prevailed. That which Mr. Disraeli in 1861 termed 'the phantom of an United Italy,' has become a reality, instead of that confederacy of States under the presidency of the Pope, which France recommended. The selection of Florence to be the capital of the new kingdom, and the treaty concluded between

the Emperor Napoleon and the King of Italy, to provide for the evacuation of Rome by the French troops in two years, are measures conceived in a liberal spirit, and confirm the wisdom of the policy advocated by this country. The eager adoption by the Hellenes of a sovereign connected with the English dynasty, afforded another instance of the confidence reposed in the straightforward and disinterested policy of Great Britain. The all but unanimous election of a British Prince, and his waiver of the proffered crown of Greece, at once frustrated the intrigues and disproved the calumnies of our rivals and detractors in the Levant.

The Opposition consumed great part of two Sessions in the criticism of despatches and in cavilling at letters in reference to Poland and to Denmark. The policy, however, which Parliament sanctioned in regard to both, on the whole, faithfully reflected the feelings, and expressed the judgment, of the country. Few will be found to say that we should have embarked in a war for Poland. Fewer still will assert that we should have looked on without raising a protest in favour of justice and humanity. None but those whom political animosity has blinded will say that, with a fixed determination from the first not to intervene, we should have permitted the Poles to delude themselves with hopes of assistance.

England acted in a similar spirit in the case of Denmark. She laboured to bring about not only that combination of England with France which, as Mr. Disraeli has truly observed, 'renders war difficult,' but that further combination of both with Russia which, according to the same authority, 'renders war impossible.' So long as one or both of those combinations was probable or possible, it would have been treason to peace to proclaim to Germany that in no circumstances would England intervene. On the other hand, as soon as Powers more bound and better able to assist Denmark declined to support her, England was not called upon to undertake single-handed the common task. Had she done so, she would have summoned the Germanic Confederation into the field; she must have given the signal for hostilities, not only in the Baltic, but in the Adriatic, on the plains of Italy, and on the banks of the Theiss. She must have incurred the fearful responsibility of extinguishing one war by kindling other and greater wars. Time has amply justified the course pursued in the case of Poland and of Denmark, as it has done in that of Italy. Although we view with the deepest pain the injuries which have been inflicted by Germany on Denmark, and the arbitrary and unjust policy of the Court of Berlin has alienated this country from Prussia, it was not for us to sally forth the Don Quixotes of

Europe to avenge the wrongs of every people on the Continent.

We believe it was the Emperor of the French who once observed 'that the moral influence of a country always stood in direct proportion to the number of bullets she could send amongst her enemies.' If this be so, the forbearance of England cannot, even for a moment, have impaired her moral influence. Nor can it be said by any whose memories carry them back for a few short years, that England, if the occasion be adequate, has lost her ancient spirit. In the affair of the 'Trent,' at a moment when America justly boasted that her naval and military power was greater than it ever had been, England vindicated the rights of neutrals and asserted the freedom of the seas. At the same time she has shown deference to weaker Powers by the surrender, at once wise and generous, of the Ionian Islands to Greece, and the submission of her disputes with Brazil to arbitration. A great nation never loses aught of her greatness by treating Powers far below herself in strength, and perhaps in civilisation, with the utmost forbearance and moderation; and we trust that our Government, proceeding in this spirit, will be enabled before long to resume friendly relations with the latter Empire.

Strict neutrality has been observed towards both the contending parties in North America in

novel circumstances which rendered neutrality singularly difficult. On the one hand, we have resisted solicitations prematurely to recognise the South, we have withstood temptations to break the blockade, and have refused to permit this country or Canada to be made a basis for the equipment of hostile expeditions. On the other, we have declined to consider the South as other than belligerents, or to treat their cruisers as pirates, and prohibit them from entering our ports. Every month that has elapsed since the commencement of that war has raised delicate questions in the application of international or municipal law. The escape of the 'Florida' and 'Alabama,' the detention of the 'Alexandra' and of the Confederate rams, are in the recollection of all. The enlistment or kidnapping of men for the ships of the one party and the armies of the other are notorious; but besides these, questions concerning contraband of war, the destination of cargoes, the treatment of prizes, and numberless other points, all complicated by the changes in the mode and materials of war, have called for the continual exercise of temper and of judgment. That we have nevertheless escaped being dragged into hostilities is only due to the firmness and forbearance of Parliament and of the Government which it has supported. Now that the civil strife which has desolated the United States is drawing to a close,

it may well be hoped that any feelings of irritation springing out of incidents connected with it between ourselves and the people of America will speedily pass away. The termination of the war will, however, leave many points to be adjusted, many misconceptions to be cleared up, which will call for the continued exercise of the same fair and impartial spirit and of the same qualities that have hitherto animated and directed the councils of our Government.

The same reluctance to become entangled in a network of engagements, the same indisposition to take an active part in questions not directly affecting the welfare or the dignity of the kingdom, which has marked our policy towards particular countries, led the Government to decline the proposal of the French Emperor for a Congress on the general state of Europe. The same feeling swayed the country when with one voice it approved the refusal thus firmly, although with regret, given to the request of a friendly Power. The plain sense of Englishmen, however, felt that an attempt by a self-constituted tribunal, with no authority but Lynch-law to enforce its decisions, to effect a settlement of the struggle of races, languages, religions, and political creeds, would be premature, and only risked adding further elements of strife to those already agitating the Continent.

The rude shocks to order and to liberty, the disregard of public obligations, the nature of the contending elements on the Continent, offer no inducement to England to forego the advantages of her insular position, in order to identify herself with any one of the parties engaged, or of the causes now at issue. The multiplied facilities of communication, the extended freedom of intercourse and of trade, tend to make Europe one vast industrial and commercial association, and, so far, to substitute a community of interests for the old rivalry between States. The growth of popular influence, felt, even where not recognised, by the most despotic Powers, is gradually rendering the relations between different countries less those of dynasty to dynasty, or of Government to Government, and more those of people to people. Liberal and commercial England in an especial degree feels and appreciates these changes, and the desire and the occasion on her part to intervene in political affairs abroad is proportionately diminished. Not that we can, as we are sometimes exhorted, adopt a Japanese policy, and isolate ourselves from the world; on the contrary, our relations with foreign countries are daily increasing, and must, in the natural course of things, grow in number and in importance. The fact, however, that we have so many more affairs that do concern us to attend to, renders it the more

incumbent that we should eschew those which do not. The British Government has laboured longer and more consistently than any of the other Great Powers of Europe to uphold the faith of treaties and the balance of power, as settled in 1815, not because this country has any peculiar interest in perpetuating those arrangements, several of which we disapprove, but because they were the only tangible basis of public law, and the best security of general peace. It is not the fault of England if the course of events and the policy of other States have shaken these principles, nor is it in her power to enforce engagements which so many of the other contracting parties have shuffled off. In consequence of these transactions, the general object to which our foreign policy was directed for nearly half a century has lost much of its cogency, and the terms by which we were wont to express it have become obsolete. At the present time no positive reliance can be placed on any written territorial engagements, unless they are protected by force; and no close alliance can be said to exist between any of the principal States of Europe. This may be a danger and a misfortune for the world, and the immediate consequence of it is to be traced in the enormous military establishments of the present day. But it does not directly affect the interests of this country. Whenever our own rights are affected,

we are strong enough to protect them; but we are not really concerned in many of those questions to which an exaggerated indirect importance is still attached by the school of Tory politicians who live only in the traditions of the past, incapable of realising the circumstances of the present. Accordingly, this country should enter into no official discussion and no public engagements on affairs remotely concerning herself: she should reserve her power and influence for British purposes: she should not pronounce an opinion, unless she is resolved to support it by action: she should throw on other States the whole responsibility of acts affecting themselves more directly than they affect us. These are the views of foreign policy which have been accepted by Parliament, and we believe that the majority of the nation will indorse them. Under the present Government we have every confidence that this wise and dignified course will be pursued. But we should view with mistrust and apprehension the accession to office of men whom vanity and love of display might tempt to adopt a 'sensation' policy abroad, or who, by want of prudence and of firmness, might allow the policy of England to degenerate into subserviency to some continental Power. The recollections of a Foreign Office administered by Lord Malmesbury, the anticipations of one conducted by Mr. Disraeli, are not calculated to afford

satisfaction to those Englishmen who do not wish to see their country either the dupe or the accomplice of continental schemers.

In remote parts of the globe, the numerous possessions of the Crown and the vast extent of our commerce with nations of inferior civilisation impose upon us heavier obligations and responsibilities than fall to the share of any other Power. Thus the transactions of England with the great Empires of the East have within the last five years assumed a character even superior in importance and interest to those with more civilised communities.

In 1859, the Chinese, in violation of the treaty of Tien-tsin, resisted the progress of the British Envoy to Pekin, and inflicted a disastrous repulse upon our forces at the mouth of the Peiho. The complete success that attended the well-equipped and well-organised expedition sent out in the following year is a matter of history. The political and commercial results that have followed fully justify the course then pursued in conjunction with our French allies. Direct relations were established with the seat of empire, the power of the exclusive party was broken, and a more enlightened administration succeeded. England has since professed a policy of strict moderation in China. She has disinterestedly sought to uphold the existing Government as the best, if not the

only, safeguard against anarchy. She has, however, as a nation, resisted inducements to give active support to the reigning dynasty, or to adopt proceedings which might before long have reduced the Emperor to the condition of a Mogul or of a Nizam, governed by a British resident, and depending for his nominal sovereignty on a British force. Nor has the defence of the principal commercial ports, and of the districts immediately adjacent, constituted a departure from that policy. The sole object has been to insure the lives and property of Europeans; and the occupation of Ning-po by the rebels, and the danger of Shanghae, prove that the precaution was not unnecessary. It may now be hoped that the fall of Nankin and the destruction of the rebel chiefs, who have so long convulsed the Chinese Empire, will be followed by the restoration of general tranquillity, under an improved system of government. It speaks well for the past, and bodes well for the future, that, notwithstanding the devastation of whole provinces by the locust flights of the Taepings, and by the imperial hordes, the value of our trade with China, which in 1858 was under 10,000,000*l.*, has since risen to 18,000,000*l.* The supply to this country, principally from China, of the single article tea, now almost a necessary of English life, increased by nearly 4,000,000*l.* in the space of three years.

To the United States belongs the credit or the blame, according to the view that may be taken, of having compelled the Government of the Tycoon to open his dominions to foreigners. Following in the wake of Commodore Perry's men-of-war, we concluded in 1858 a treaty under which several ports and towns have been appointed for trade. Although only in its infancy, and necessarily checked by the occurrence of civil war in the country, foreign commerce appears to have struck deep root in Japan. The English trade in goods (principally silk, cotton, and tea) at the single port of Kanagawa amounted in the year 1863 to about 2,750,000*l.* That the first relations of adventurous Europeans with a population so long trained to look upon strangers with aversion, should be attended with difficulties, was to be anticipated. Treaty obligations were neglected or altogether repudiated. Insults to foreigners were succeeded by threats, by murders, and by attacks upon the Residencies. Demands for redress were met with Asiatic duplicity and evasion. Justice from judicial tribunals, or from the Government, was not to be obtained; and it became necessary for the Western Powers, unless they would withdraw from Japan altogether, to assert their determination and their power to exact reparation and to enforce their rights. The chastisement of the Prince of Satsuma and other feudal chiefs, coupled with the

opening of the Inland Sea by the combined forces of England, France, Holland, and America, will, it may be hoped, produce such a salutary impression both upon the Central Government and the turbulent and overbearing aristocracy of Japan, as will prevent the recurrence of outrages such as those complained of.

Since England gave to her colonies the right of internal self-government, and waived all claims to subordinate their commerce to her supposed interests, their affairs occupy far less than formerly the attention of Parliament. This very change has, however, raised new and perplexing questions which the present Government has been called upon to encounter. The foremost is, how far, the control of the foreign policy of the dependencies being reserved to the mother-country, she is bound to provide for their military and naval defence. The House of Commons has affirmed that the colonies, in their altered position, have claims to Imperial aid against perils arising through Imperial policy; but that they should mainly provide for their own internal security, and should assist in their own external defence. The principle is obvious in the case of such colonies as the majority of those in Australia, but is difficult of application to all the various communities composing the British Colonial Empire. At the Cape, the colonists may involve Great Britain in a war with savages whom

she cannot restrain, but with whom, from motives of philanthropy, she has refused to allow the colonists to carry on an irregular border warfare. In New Zealand, natives and colonists are both subjects of the Crown, and whether the relations between them be reserved to officers responsible to the Home Government, or, as recently, handed over to local ministers, this country hesitates to abandon either to the mercies of the other. Canada, a purely European community in contact with a powerful neighbour, pleads that since we direct her foreign policy, she has a right to look to us for protection. On the other hand, the reply is ready that the connection between this country and Canada subsists mainly at the wish and for the benefit of the latter, and that she may, therefore, be fairly expected to undertake the part, not of an auxiliary, but of a principal, in a war on her own frontiers. The subject had till quite recently been more theoretically discussed than is usual in the House of Commons, although the heavy expenditure for colonial defences,* the premium given to wars in which the dependencies

	£
* The Imperial military expenditure for colonial defences amounted in 1860 to . . .	1,715,246
That for naval stations, convict depôts, and other posts, maintained for objects of Imperial policy, amounted in the same year to	1,509,835
Total . . .	£3,225,081

tax the mother-country and profit by her loss, called for a termination of the present anomalous state of things and the establishment of some definite and intelligible system. Such might be the adoption of a policy similar to that long pursued in India, and partially applied in Australia, under which the Central Government furnishes troops, on condition that the local authority provides for their pay and maintenance. Old-established colonies, requiring British garrisons for purposes of internal order or of protection against enemies on their frontiers, might thus still enjoy the advantage of a connection with the Empire, while England would have a security that no undue burden was cast upon herself.

The apprehension of an attack upon Canada necessitated the adoption of some immediate decision on the part of Government. The Colonial Office, greatly to its credit, firmly resisted the instigations of the Opposition to an extravagant outlay, which would at once have impoverished England and weakened Canada, by accustoming the latter to rely not upon her own, but our resources. It felt, however, that we could not with honour, at a moment when danger was supposed to threaten, withdraw our troops, but wisely defined the amount of assistance it was prepared to render, at the same time making that assistance conditional upon far greater exertions to be made by the colonists them-

selves, both as to men and to fortifications, than heretofore. The annexation of British Kaffraria to the Cape Colony is an act conceived in the same spirit. The Government has thereby declined to hold that territory at the expense of the British taxpayers as an outpost against border tribes, and has thrown upon the colony the charge of maintaining and protecting its own frontier. A still more important problem in the government of dependencies is involved in the proposal for a Federation of the British North American provinces. The Cabinet, free from the narrow-minded jealousy which formerly was felt in regard to the acquisition of power by the colonies, unhesitatingly gave its assent to the scheme, and has since expressed regret at its failure through the policy of some of the less important provinces.

No tale of transformation in Hindoo mythology is more wonderful than the change which has been wrought in India within the last few years. The enchanters that have worked the spell have been Peace, Justice, and Commerce. The system, proposed by a former, and first fairly tried under the present Liberal Administration, of governing India through a Secretary of State directly and personally responsible to Parliament, has proved beyond expectation successful. The more English tone and character impressed upon the conduct of Indian affairs has been unmistakably apparent.

The construction of railways and of telegraphs, the sale of waste lands, the settlement of the land-tax, the adoption of a paper currency, the extension of education, the conciliatory policy towards native princes, the admission of natives to offices of the highest trust, are all recent measures, the good effects of which have scarcely begun to be realised. The appointment of Sir John Lawrence as Governor-General is one that reflects honour upon Lord Palmerston's Ministry. Nor has English legislation been devoid of immediate utility to India. By Acts passed in 1861, the local European regiments were amalgamated with the Queen's army, and the position of the Civil Service, both covenanted and uncovenanted, was defined and settled. Under other Acts the High Courts of Judicature and the Governor-General's Council were reformed. The first of these measures constituted one sole Court of Appeal in each Presidency, in which the varied knowledge and experience of all branches of the legal profession, both at home and in India, are combined. The second provided a seat in the Council to which a financier of English experience may be appointed. Under the able guidance of finance ministers selected by Sir Charles Wood, the alarming deficit of the Indian exchequer were for three successive budgets converted into a surplus, which in 1863 equalled 1,800,000*l.* This result, moreover, was

attained co-incidentally with a large outlay upon public works of a permanent character, while the debt has been since 1862 reduced by 9,000,000*l.* Owing mainly to the unexpected and unparalleled fall in the price of opium, the accounts for the last year show a slight excess of expenditure over income. Considering, however, the vast resources of India, and the success with which they are being developed, we may feel confident that Mr. Massey will before long bring about a more satisfactory condition of affairs.

The Derby-Disraeli Parliament will, according to a dictum of Mr. Cobden, be known in history as 'the extravagant Parliament.' Watchfulness and intelligent criticism of the estimates have undoubtedly been neglected in an unprecedented degree by the Opposition whose special function it should be to check expenditure; and, as a consequence, have fallen into discredit and disuse. Vague threats of a wholesale refusal of taxes, eloquent declamations fitfully indulged in, and abstract resolutions in favour of economy, are no substitutes for less showy but more practical work. At the same time, if it be true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the approbation, we may say at the instigation, of the House and the country, has proposed the highest estimates ever submitted in time of peace, it is also due to him to state that the tide of regular

expenditure, which had been continuously rising since 1852, was first turned in 1862, and has been since on the ebb.* The high level reached by the national expenditure has been mainly due to those great curses of modern civilisation, huge standing armaments. In 1860-61 the actual expenditure on the navy rose to its maximum of 13,332,000*l.*, while that on the army amounted in the same year to upwards of 18,000,000*l.* In the words of M. Fould, 'an expenditure of emulation' has been of late carried on between the Great Powers of the world. Not only have fleets and armies increased in size, but a revolution in the nature of armaments on land and on sea, as great and more sudden than any since the invention of gunpowder, has been, and still is, in progress. This country has but followed the example of others, and striven to maintain her relative strength. She did not introduce Minié muskets, rifled guns, or armour-plated ships. Nor should some of those, at least, who declaim against our 'bloated armaments,' forget that they were the foremost to urge, in headlong haste, the 'reconstruction of the navy,' and the immediate adoption of a gun

	£
* The total gross expenditure was, in round numbers, in 1852	54,000,000
For the year ending March 1861 . .	73,000,000
For the year ending March 31, 1864 .	68,000,000
Estimated for current year . . .	66,000,000

showing a decrease of 7,000,000*l.* in the last four years.

which, according to the highest military authority, 'could do everything but speak,' at a moment when the nation was affected by a panic which they did much to create, and contributed nothing to allay.

The question, however, we have now to consider, is whether adequate results have been obtained by the money expended. Under the present Government the number of steam vessels in our navy has been increased, but a far greater addition to our maritime strength has been made by a general augmentation of the power of machinery, and in the calibre of guns. Indeed, the tendency of modern improvements is to render fewer ships, guns, and hands necessary by the introduction of more powerful and more costly vessels, heavier artillery, and the substitution of highly skilled labour and mechanical appliances for mere numbers and brute force. Wooden vessels will still continue of use to patrol the seas and watch over our wide-spread commerce, and profiting by the experience of America, we are now building a certain number of swift vessels of the same character as, but improvements upon, the famous 'Alabama.' The real strength, however, of our line-of-battle must in future consist in that iron fleet which has been created since 1859. In that year we had not one such vessel afloat, and only one in the builder's hands. We

have now twenty-four iron-clads in commission, or ready for commission, while six others are in progress. Nor are these vessels mere rafts carrying a martello-tower, or Noah's Arks strengthened with iron bars, like most of the hastily constructed Monitors and Merrimacs of America; nor are they floating batteries only fit to lie at the entrance of harbours, or creep about the mouths of rivers, but ocean-going ships, many of which can steam their fourteen knots an hour, and fight their guns in heavy seas.*

It is an easy matter for those who are not responsible for our national safety to taunt those who are, and scoffingly to inquire where we have got a perfect ship, or why the artillery of the future has not been decided upon. The plain answer, and one the justice of which is obvious to every man of sense, is that the present is a period of transi-

* Armour-Plated Ships on April 1, 1865.

	Number	Tonnage	No. of Guns	Horse Power
Afloat	24	92,007	471	19,010
Building . . .	6	17,202	76	3,670
Floating batteries afloat	5	8,955	76	950
Total . .	35	118,164	623	23,630

Of the armour-plated ships, 12 are wholly protected, and 18 are partially protected; 4 are turret ships.

The floating batteries are wholly protected.

tion, and that any final conclusion as to ships or guns would be not only foolish but culpable. The last five years have been years of continued experiments and progress both at home and abroad. We have advanced in that time from wooden to iron-clad vessels; from vessels partially armed to vessels clad in complete armour; from vessels wearing armour calculated to resist 68-pounders and 110-pounders, to vessels destined to cope with 300-pounders and 600-pounders hurling steel shot and shells, each of the latter in itself a piece of artillery of greater power than the guns which constituted Nelson's broadsides. The best quality of iron, the proper thickness of plates and of backing, the due proportions and combination of wood and of iron, the best form of vessels, all has been, and still is, matter of experiment, not only with ourselves, but with all other maritime nations. That large vessels capable of carrying a great weight of armour can be produced, we have proved. The construction of a class of ships combining, what a few years ago would have been deemed the irreconcilable qualities of small tonnage, light draft of water, a great speed, with the capacity of carrying heavy armour and guns of the largest calibre, is now actively in progress. Moreover, new contrivances in regard to such matters as the generation of steam, surface-condensing, or the economy of fuel, compel constant

renovation of, or improvements in, machinery, while the changes in shipbuilding have necessitated additions to dock and basin accommodation.

Six years ago Sir J. Pakington, then First Lord of the Admiralty, lamented the humiliating position of Great Britain, whose ships of war remained in port four, five, or even six months, unable to obtain a complement of seamen. Now, whenever line-of-battle ships or frigates are commissioned, they are ready for sea within a month, often within a fortnight, or a still shorter period. The explanation is, that the service has under the present Government been rendered popular, and has become more attractive to merchant seamen. This favourable change is in no slight degree due to the Naval Discipline Act of 1860. By this measure the former Articles of War, dating from 1749, but the main provisions of which were even older, and utterly unsuited to modern times and ideas, have been superseded. Greater facilities for investigating complaints, and a more equitable scale of punishment have been substituted for the Draconian severity of the old code. Thanks to a wise liberality on the part of the Parliament, the pay and allowances of officers and seamen serving in the navy have been augmented; dépôt ships and naval barracks have been provided, in which relaxation is afforded to men returning from abroad,

without their being lost to the service. Training ships have been established, in which boys are efficiently prepared for the navy, and from these nurseries about 2,500 youths, bound to serve for ten of the best years of a seaman's life, namely, from eighteen to twenty-eight, are annually supplied to the service. A new and most efficient force, the Naval Reserve, has been created within the same period. It consists at the present time of about 17,000 men, all of whom are thoroughly drilled gunners. A decision has also been taken to arm merchant ships, commanded and partially manned by officers and men of the Reserve, that they may carry on their drill at sea. The change that has taken place in the quality and character of the men serving in the navy is as remarkable as that in the vessels of which it is composed. The proportion of continuous service men is largely increased. Crime and drunkenness have diminished; education has spread; the health of the crews has improved, while their discipline never stood higher.

The improvements in both the *matériel* and the *personnel* of the army have been scarcely less important. Since June 1859, from 7,000 to 8,000 new pieces of ordnance, many of them rifled, all of a power and calibre far exceeding those they have superseded, have been passed into the service. The science of gunnery being still in an

experimental state, great cost has been incurred in the trial of guns, of projectiles, and of fuzes. The battle between guns and plates, between the attack and the defence, is waged with apparently inexhaustible ingenuity and provokingly even results. It appears still quite uncertain what system of rifling will prove the best, and whether the ultimate decision will be in favour of breech-loaders or of muzzle-loaders. The strength of a gun is, however, the first and most important condition of efficiency, and that to which all others are subsidiary. In this respect it is satisfactory to find that we construct artillery capable in a higher degree than that of foreign nations of enduring heavy charges of powder, and the strain to which rifled ordnance is necessarily submitted, and at the same time more free from liability to burst explosively.

The sanitary condition of the army, and improvements in the position of the private soldier have not been neglected. Reading and recreation rooms, gymnastic training, instruction in various matters useful on a campaign have been provided. The enrolment of volunteers has been so successfully fostered and encouraged, that that force, which the summer of 1859 found in its infancy, now amounts to 170,000 men and officers, and includes more than 400 batteries of artillery. The national character of this new army has

been recognised by Parliament, and its efficiency increased at the same time by a system of capitation grants, given not merely as a premium for attendance on drill, but as a payment for results, namely, ascertained knowledge of and proficiency in military duties.*

Of all the military measures sanctioned by this Parliament, that upon which its judgment has been most impugned, and upon which it must be content to wait the verdict of the future, is the fortifications of the principal dockyards and arsenals. The protection of these vital points had been, as is well known, contemplated by Pitt, urged by the Duke of Wellington, and was again recommended by the Defence Commission which reported in 1859. In view of the permanent nature of the intended works, it was considered just to provide for their cost by money raised upon terminable annuities. This was effected at a moderate rate of interest, and works are now in actual progress at nine different points. The

* Strength of the Volunteer Force on Dec. 1, 1864.

	Enrolled.	Efficients.
Light Horse . . .	766	548
Mounted Rifles . .	546	381
Artillery . . .	29,813	22,281
Engineers . . .	4,343	3,237
Rifles	135,147	97,734
Total . .	170,615	124,181

It is satisfactory to find that the force steadily increases in numbers year by year.

value of such defences against naval attacks rests upon the plain fact that, whereas there is a limit to the weight of armour and of guns that a floating battery can carry, there is no such limit in the case of a work on solid ground. As against attacks from the land side they are secure from an enemy unprovided with a siege train, and they enable militia or volunteers to resist regular troops. Nor in considering now or hereafter the policy of placing these cradles of our fleets and armaments beyond the reach of those sudden blows which steam has facilitated, should the panic that prevailed only four years ago be forgotten. France, although her armaments were professedly on a peace footing, had in an incredibly short space of time invaded Italy, and broken the might of Austria; her iron-clad ships, her rifled guns, her naval conscripts, her fleet of transports, her flat-bottomed boats for landing troops, were in every mouth. The alarm was probably exaggerated, possibly altogether unfounded, still, looking to the mercantile credit, looking to the dignity of the country, it could scarcely be deemed unnecessary to guard against the recurrence of such fears.*

Although thus occupied with financial reforms

* The places at which fortifications are being erected are Portsmouth, Plymouth, Pembroke, Portland, Gravesend, Chatham, Medway and Sheerness, Dover, and Cork.

and questions of Imperial policy, the Government has not neglected measures of internal improvement of a less ambitious, but of a highly useful character. In view of the importance of their subject matter we give a place in the foremost ranks to the measures adopted to alleviate the distress in the cotton districts. The patient fortitude of the operatives, their intelligent appreciation of the causes of their suffering, the liberality and the judgment displayed by the associations organised for their assistance, are probably without a parallel in history.* Notwithstanding these voluntary efforts, our Poor-Law legislation was subjected to a trial of unexampled severity. In this emergency, the principle (as old as the Poor-Law of Elizabeth) of rates-in-aid was reverted to, and the burdens which must have fallen with crushing weight upon particular localities, were, by the Union Relief Aid Acts, distributed over a wider area. Additional powers were also given to guardians to raise funds by loan. Still more important Acts were the Public Works Acts, by

* In December 1862, when the distress was at its height, the number of persons in receipt of relief in 21 unions or townships, containing a population of less than 2,000,000, was 508,000, while the weekly loss of wages was estimated at 168,000*l.* The number in receipt of relief has since been reduced to about 113,000.

The sum raised for relief of distress by Relief Committee, has amounted to 1,594,722*l.*, that by legal means to 2,362,702*l.*, making a total from all sources of 3,957,424*l.*

which 1,850,000*l.* was placed at the disposal of the Public Works Loan Commissioners to be advanced for the employment of labour. Under these measures a system of public works has been organised, by which the demoralisation of the poor has been checked, and the sanitary condition of the districts will be greatly improved. Their success in this last point of view is shown by the fact that upwards of sixty local authorities have undertaken works under them. Sewers extending upwards of 304 miles in length are in course of construction, and 276 miles of streets will be made or improved. Parks and pleasure-grounds are being laid out, cemeteries have been provided, and extensive works for water-supply are in progress. It is calculated that not less than 30,000 or 40,000 of the industrious classes are directly and indirectly receiving support under these measures, while it is with good reason believed that the works have prevented pauperism to an extent equalling treble the number of persons actually engaged upon them, in consequence of the employment so provided having been offered to all able-bodied applicants for relief. Important amendments have also been effected in our general Poor-Laws, in spite of the stubborn resistance made by prejudice and selfishness. The Irremovable Poor Act of 1861 mitigated the operation of the laws of settlement and of removal. It diminished

litigation between parishes, and tended to free the labourers from the feeling that they are serfs, *adscripti glebæ*, so destructive of their spirit of self-reliance and of enterprise. Under it, no persons having resided three years within the limits of the same Union are liable to deportation so long as they continue there to reside, and already one-third of the whole number of our paupers enjoy the immunity thus conferred. The success of Mr. Villiers's measure has been so indisputable, that it led to the Union Chargeability Bill of the present Session, which, if it be allowed to pass the House of Lords, will still further extend the benefits of his former Act. By this Bill the period of residence requisite to insure irremovability is reduced to one year, while the whole charge of maintaining the poor, be they irremovable paupers or otherwise, is cast upon the common fund of the Unions. The inducement to parishes to pull down or abstain from erecting cottages for their labourers, lest these should at any time become chargeable, is thus destroyed. The measure is a just one, as depriving parishes of the power of thus throwing their own legitimate burdens upon their neighbours, but still more important in the benefit it confers upon the poor, whom employers will no longer have an interest in banishing to a distance from the scene of their occupation. The diminution of costs under such

laws, by the reduction in the number of removals, and the saving in the time and strength of the labourer, who will now be allowed to reside in the locality in which he works, will constitute a gain to the whole community.

A more equitable distribution of burdens in Unions has also been made, by requiring the several parishes to contribute to the common-fund charges according to the value of their property, instead of, as formerly, according to their average expenditure in relief, or, as was justly said, according to their poverty. By another Act, the hardships that attend the removal of the Irish poor to their own country have been in great measure mitigated.

The slender assistance first given in the year 1839 for the erection of schools for the education of children of the labouring classes gradually increased, till, in 1862, the Committee of Council had become a central bureau at the head of a system so complicated as to defy explanation. It dispensed upwards of 800,000*l.* a year; it had virtually in its pay 40,000 teachers and managers of schools, and directly influenced a vast body interested in the work of education. The report of the Commission on this subject showed that the cost to the public had been growing, was growing, and might certainly be expected to increase to 2,000,000*l.*, and, not improbably, to 5,000,000*l.*

a year; that, meanwhile, not more than one-fourth of the children in the assisted schools, and not more than one-ninth of the whole number of children for whose benefit the grants were designed, were adequately instructed in reading, writing, or arithmetic. A prompt and drastic remedy was manifestly required, and Mr. Lowe introduced the well-known and well-abused Revised Code, which continued the existing requirements of qualification in the teachers and fitness in the schools in other respects, but resolved all grants into a capitation grant, payable only according to the measure of proved capacity in the individual scholars. The proposal that persons who had persuaded themselves, if not others, that they had a vested interest to receive public money on exhibiting a certain machinery, should be further required to show that the machinery did its intended work, was received as might be expected. Clergy, dissenting ministers, esquires, and philanthropists, above all, schoolmasters and pupil-teachers, and, in many instances, the very inspectors who served the department, forgot all their former feuds to join in a crusade against 'payment for results.' Notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon its members, Parliament, in the main, affirmed the principles of the Revised Code. It, however, in some degree, modified their application, and consented that

only two-thirds of the proposed capitation grant should depend upon the results of examination, and that the remaining one-third should be payable if inspection proved satisfactory. Although the Revised Code only came into full operation in June 1863, its effect has already been to reduce the expenditure by 150,000*l.*; it has done away with the complex system of appropriated grants, and secured to the poor more efficient instruction. The application of the Conscience clause, the union of a number of schools, situate in thinly-peopled parishes, under the superintendence of one certificated teacher, and the fresh facilities afforded for the examination of evening schools, will, it may be hoped, extend the benefits of the system to institutions greatly in need of them. It may be expected that the annual grants will again increase, but inasmuch as this can now only take place through a corresponding advance in the quality and extent of the education imparted to the humbler classes, such an increase will only afford a just subject for congratulation even to the most rigid economist.

That the interests of the working-classes have not in other respects been forgotten, the Post Office Savings Bank Act and the Government Annuities Bill sufficiently testify. The success which the first of these Acts has met with in all parts of the country is most remarkable. In less than

four years 3,096 Post Office Savings Banks have been established, which at the present time accommodate upwards of 500,000 depositors, the accumulated fund belonging to whom is largely in excess of the sum of 5,000,000*l.* Nor is this gratifying result due to a mere transfer of depositors from one class of savings banks to another, but to a real increase in the number of saving persons throughout the United Kingdom.* The Government Annuities Act supplies a missing link between friendly societies and ordinary insurance offices. It offers the best possible security to the purchasers of deferred annuities, or of life policies of certain limited amounts, and is thus well calculated to prove attractive to the labouring population, and to encourage habits of frugality and of providence. Deputations of working men to Mr. Gladstone after the passing of the measure testified their appreciation of its value and their gratitude towards its author.

It is due to the industry and perseverance of

* Total number of depositors in old savings banks, prior to establishment of Post Office Banks, in 1851	1,609,103
Total number of depositors in old savings banks and Post Office Savings Banks combined, on March 31, 1865	2,012,152
Increase in the number of savings banks depositors since the establishment of Post Office Savings Banks, in 1861	40,049

the present Administration to acknowledge that it has passed several measures long desired and often attempted, but which, not being of a character to win popular applause, and running counter to old-established prejudices and vested interests, were, after efforts more or less earnest, abandoned by former legislatures.

The Bankruptcy Bill, enacted in 1861, abolished the needless distinction between bankruptcy and insolvency, and aimed at putting an end to excessive and vexatious delays and unnecessary charges in the proceedings of the courts. It was received with favour by the commercial classes, and, although shorn of some of its most valuable provisions in the House of Lords, we believe its effect to have been, that whereas persons before preferred to settle cases by the clumsy and unsatisfactory expedient of private winding-up, they now do not hesitate to have recourse to the court. The trust-deed system has been a marked success, and the way has been prepared for the entire abolition of arrest on final process.

The Act facilitating the registration of titles and the transfer of land has only been in force since October 1862. Yet in March last, property of great value had already been registered under its provisions. This result, considering the nature of the Act, must be viewed with satisfaction. It is only a permissive measure, the utility, nay, the

very existence of which, have yet to become generally known. It has to encounter and overcome the prejudices and interests of the father-confessors of this lawyer-ridden people, the attornies. That it is gradually growing in favour with the public, is shown by the fact, that during the past twelvemonth the applications for registration were four times as numerous as in the preceding year. As an instance of its beneficial character, the Lord Chancellor exhibited to the House of Lords a certificate of title to an estate, the result of an abstract of 150 folios, contained in a single sheet of paper, and explained that a purchaser might readily ascertain for himself that the entry in the established Register corresponded with the certificate, and, at the cost of *5s.*, acquire an indefeasible title.

The Highway District Acts of 1862 and 1864 substituted district for parochial management of highways, thus applying to roads the policy which had been found so beneficial in the administration of poor-relief. Measures having the same object in view had been proposed by the Government of Lord Derby and by preceding Ministries, but had failed before the obstinate resistance opposed by those interested in the maintenance of the old extravagant and inefficient system. Although Sir G. Grey's Acts are only permissive, they have already been adopted in thirty-two out of the forty

counties in England, and 277 districts have been constituted, superseding the petty jurisdictions of 6,853 parishes, townships, or smaller divisions.

A large number of turnpikes have been abolished in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, and indications are not wanting that a similar policy will, at no distant period, be extended to other parts of the country. An attempt has been made to remedy the defective and capricious system of assessing property to the poor-rate, the basis of the greater part of that local taxation which now amounts to 18,000,000*l.* a year. After much care and consideration, the Union Assessment Committee Act of 1862 was passed, under which the power of assessing property has been transferred from the ministerial officers of separate parishes to a competent and responsible tribunal composed of *ex-officio* and elected guardians of the Union.

Among other useful measures enacted in the course of the last six years, may be named the Thames Embankment Bill, the Act enabling Local Authorities to obtain Loans for the Construction and Improvement of Harbours, the Drainage of Land Bill, the Act giving increased facilities for the Construction of Railways, the Metropolitan Houseless Poor Bill, the several Acts for the Consolidation of the Criminal Law, the Penal Servitude Amendment Act, and the

measures by which some 2,000 obsolete laws, which needlessly encumbered the Statute Books, have been abolished. The Act enabling University electors to vote by means of voting papers, without personally attending the poll, and that providing a self-acting machinery for the registration of county voters in Scotland, embody principles likely to receive further extension. Nor must we omit to mention the amendment made in the law relating to endowed schools, by which the trustees of all foundations not expressly confined to a particular Church are required to admit children, irrespective of the religious denomination of their parents; or the Lord Chancellor's recent Act for the sale of small benefices, which has already led to results highly advantageous to the Church. It may be hoped that the Clerical Subscription Bill, that providing for the Concentration of Courts of Justice, that amending the Law of Partnership, that securing a Record of Titles in Ireland, the Colonial Naval Defence Bill, and others, may yet be added to the roll of valuable measures passed by the present Parliament. On the whole, looking back at the legislation since 1859, we are not surprised that it should have elicited from the candour of Lord Stanley, himself one of the most pains taking members of the House, the following honest declaration:—

'When that inevitable period arrives when we shall be sent back to our constituents, I do not look forward to the prospect of being called to any severe account for any faults of omission of which we have been guilty. In two departments at least—in law and in finance—very considerable practical improvements have been made within the last few years, and no difference of political connection will prevent me, and I am sure will prevent you, from doing justice to those by whom those improvements have been initiated.'

Let us, however, in mercantile phrase, 'take stock' of the work accomplished under the present Government. Briefly, the chief results appear to be:—1. Reduced taxation. 2. Reduced debt. 3. Expenditure checked. 4. Revenue buoyant. 5. Tariff simplified. 6. Trade largely augmented. 7. Peace maintained with Europe and America. 8. India regenerated. 9. Relations established with China and Japan. 10. A new navy created. 11. Efficiency of army increased. 12. Volunteer force established and organised. 13. Arsenals and dockyards fortified. 14. Cotton crisis weathered. 15. Poor-Laws amended in the interest both of ratepayers and recipients of relief. 16. Bankruptcy laws ameliorated. 17. Dealings with land facilitated. 18. Improvement of means of communication promoted. 19. Safe and ready investments provided

for the savings of industry. 20. Education cheapened and improved.

No questions have been debated at greater length, with more earnestness, or with less positive results, than those of a semi-ecclesiastical character. Nor is the reason far to seek. The Liberal party, as a whole, has been reluctant to make religious questions the distinctive badge of political parties; the Conservative leaders have grasped at them as affording an opportunity for making political capital. In the autumn of 1860, Mr. Disraeli, at a loss for a cry to rally his disheartened followers, and ignoring that the Government of which he had been the leader had twice proposed Bills which surrendered the whole principle of church-rates, proclaimed himself their champion and defender. His party, professing alarm at the so-called 'revelations' made before the committee of the Lords on church-rates in 1859, and at the alleged 'discovery' that there was a party in existence desirous of severing the connection between Church and State, roused themselves to the old war-cry of the Church in danger. The result of this new direction impressed upon party zeal and party organisation, was that the Bill for the Abolition of Church-rates, carried in 1859 by a majority of 70, was in 1861, in the very same House, thrown out by the casting vote of the Speaker, and in the following year defeated

by a majority of 1. The Holy War was vigorously prosecuted, and victories were obtained, in 1861 and 1862, over the Bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and over Mr. Bouverie's Bills for Clergy Relief, and for relaxing the Act of Uniformity. Yet easier triumphs were won over the Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill, and Sir Morton Peto's Burials Bill. In 1863, the Opposition leaders, possibly with a recollection of their signal discomfiture in connection with Mr. Stansfeld's motion on economy at the close of the preceding Session, ventured on no party division; but concentrating all their powers against Sir John Trelawny, threw out his measure by a majority of 10. Intoxicated with this triumph over Dissent, the victors hastened to proclaim the millennium of Conservative reaction. The Church was loudly exhorted to repeat the course she had followed with such disastrous results to herself in the case of the Reform Bill and of Catholic Emancipation; to identify herself with a political party, to undo the work of years, and forfeit the hold she has of late recovered upon the middle and lower classes. The movement, however, in favour of a relaxation of clerical subscriptions, and the remarkable petition of Oxford Fellows and Tutors against Academical Tests, presented to both Houses towards the end of the Session of 1863, came opportunely to prove

that there were men, both in the Church and the University, who did not rest the security of the Established Church upon a blind adherence to antiquated forms, or the assertion of petty and disputed privileges.* In the following year Mr. Dodson's Bill for relieving Oxford Churchmen from the bondage of stringent subscriptions, and admitting Dissenters to the higher degrees, without branding them as an inferior caste, united in its support Liberals of different denominations. The struggles that ensued stemmed the tide of Conservative success and dispelled its prestige. The Bill was indeed defeated, but only in its very last stage by a majority of two, after recourse had by its opponents to every stratagem and obstruction the forms of the House admit of; and the stronghold of Church Conservatism, on the showing of its champions, owes its security to a circumstance as fortuitous as that which saved the Capitol from the Gauls, or the army of Darius from destruction by the Scythians. The present Session has afforded other unmistakable symptoms that that which Mr. Gladstone well described as the policy of 'indiscriminate resistance' had been carried in Church affairs to a length that had provoked a

* The petition was signed by 13 Professors, by 56 out of 131 first-class men who were Fellows of Colleges, and had appended to it many of the most illustrious names in the Church and in the University.

revulsion of feeling. The Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill has been once more carried through the House of Commons, and the task of rejecting a measure, which its very destroyers can scarcely deny to be reasonable, was left to Lord Derby and the House of Lords. The House of Lords has itself passed a measure relieving the clergy from the most onerous portion of the subscriptions hitherto required from them. In the Commons, triumphant majorities have affirmed successive stages of Mr. Monsell's Bill for freeing Roman Catholics from an oath which, while it affords no security to Protestantism, is felt to be an insult and a degradation to those from whom it is exacted. We trust that the Oxford Tests Bill, now in the hands of Mr. Goschen, will meet with no less a success. Certain we are that the justice and the moderation of the proposals it embodies will before long ensure its acceptance by the Legislature, and that a concession which has been deemed advisable in the case of the clergy, cannot long be withheld from laymen who offer themselves for degrees in Arts and in Science.

The Liberal reaction on ecclesiastical questions has not been confined to the walls of Parliament. The Report of the Royal Commission on Clerical Subscriptions, the concurrence of the Convocation of the Province of York in that Report, the proceedings in the Convocation of Can-

terbury, show the clergy to be more inclined to generous views and more disposed to allow a relaxation of the tests required by the Act of Uniformity than the Conservative laity in Parliament. Lord R. Cecil's rash declaration, that none but a good Conservative could be a good Churchman, roused the just indignation of members of the Church of all shades of politics, and called forth emphatic protests from the 'Guardian' and other clerical papers. Contested elections in various parts of the country, and the determined support given to Mr. Gladstone at Oxford by leading Churchmen of the High, the Low, and the Broad schools, are a worthy answer, on the part of the Church, to the insolent assumption that, in return for the patronage of the Carlton Club, she should degrade herself to become the political hack and the electioneering agent of the Conservative party.

The boasted Conservative reaction has rested upon no better foundation than some victories over Dissent, and over fragmentary Reform Bills, introduced by private members. Throughout this Parliament Mr. Disraeli and his followers have never grappled on any serious question with the Government, have never encountered the Liberals as a party, but to meet with discomfiture.

How complete a delusion Conservative reaction

in Parliament was, the vote on the Dano-German question conclusively proved. Mr. Disraeli's motion was brought forward at a moment singularly favourable to his party. The efforts of the Government to secure peace in the North of Europe had failed, while a combination of circumstances carried over to the Opposition eighteen or twenty Irish Roman Catholic votes, usually found on the Liberal side of the House. The motion had a two-fold aspect; it was at once a censure of the Government and a vote of confidence in the Opposition leaders. The greater the censure, if any, which the debate proved the Government to have deserved, the more complete and the more crushing was the want of confidence which the result expressed in those who aspired to fill their places. The division in the House of Lords was a still bitterer humiliation to those who provoked it. The hereditary Peerage and the Church, as represented by those of their members present at the deliberations on the questions at issue, gave a majority against the Conservative motion. How profound was the mortification at finding that these two bodies, reckoned by the Tory party, the one a sure ally, the other a willing tool, were not to be depended upon, betrayed itself in the first burst of rage and disappointment uttered by the Conservative press. The scurrilous abuse of those ministers of religion, who had dared to support a

motion in favour of peace, in particular, will not easily be forgotten, and is valuable as illustrating the degree of subserviency the Tory party considers itself entitled to exact from the Church in return for the protection it affects to extend to her.

The result of the Danish debate appears to have completely cowed the leaders of the Tory party; at all events, they have ever since remained quiescent, and have allowed the dissolution to approach without an attempt to recover their position or retrieve their reputation.

In a few weeks the existing Parliament will have closed its career, and the constituencies will be called upon to express a judgment upon it and elect its successor. We hope and believe that the country, although disinclined to organic changes, will be found favourable to progressive Reforms, and will strengthen the hands of the Liberal party in the new House of Commons. Each of the great parties in the state has its mission to perform, and may at particular conjunctures, advantageously to the community, enjoy a tenure of power. Whether we look, however, to principles, to measures, or to men, there are weighty and valid reasons in favour of the ascendancy of the Liberal party at the present time. Notwithstanding the havoc that death has of late made in its ranks, its superiority in administrative

experience and statesmanlike ability is clearly marked. A party that in little more than five years has lost such men in the Upper House as Lords Aberdeen, Macaulay, Dalhousie, Canning, Elgin, Campbell, Carlisle, and the Duke of Newcastle; and in the Lower as Sir James Graham, Sir G. Cornwall Lewis, Sidney Herbert, Ellice, and Cobden, and yet presents such an array of strength, must indeed be composed of no ordinary elements. On the other side we see, with two brilliant exceptions, a combination of mediocrities. Even the names of the twin leaders—Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli—are not associated with any idea that sways and influences men, or with any measure of practical statesmanship, unless it be in the case of Lord Derby, with the Abolition of Church Cess, the Suppression of Irish Bishoprics, and the proposal to convert to secular uses the property thus wrested from the Established Church. The reason of this great disparity in the relative forces of the two parties is apparent. The Liberal party, as at present constituted, is not merely a political section, it is emphatically the party of the country. It unites in one common centre all the leaders of the Liberal party in the stricter sense of the term. It embraces the representative of that race of statesmen who, with Canning and Huskisson, first had the foresight to perceive, and the courage to avow, that the old

maxims of the Tory party, in which they had been reared, were inapplicable to a period when men's minds, no longer absorbed in the struggles of war, were devoted to the advancement of science, and the arts of peace; they inaugurated, and their survivor, Lord Palmerston, in no slight degree, has guided the destinies of that period of unexampled growth in civilisation which the last half century has witnessed. It further comprises all those able men, the flower of the Conservative party as reconstituted under Sir Robert Peel, who with their great leader became converts to the policy of commercial and industrial freedom, and gave the most indubitable proofs of the sincerity of their convictions by the sacrifice of party ties and private friendships, and by submitting to a long ostracism from place, power, and distinction.

Thus the decapitated Rump of the Tory party stands like the mutinous Sepoy army, under the command of mere sergeants and corporals, or of adventurers and renegades, arrayed in battle against those very officers to whose natural superiority and high attainments it alone owed whatever success and reputation it had achieved.

If we compare, not the merits of the leaders on either side, but the character and conduct of the parties themselves, we see that the Liberals have on the whole asserted their creed, and proved true to their distinctive principles, and these principles

we moreover believe to be in accordance with the general feelings of the country. Abroad, the Liberals have striven to preserve peace with honour, at home they have been found ready to listen to reason and to argument, and have laboured according to the measure of their strength, wherever a case was fairly made out to remove a grievance or adopt an improvement. The Conservatives, on the other hand, though no longer consistent and outspoken, like the Tories of old, have in opposition generally acted after the instincts of their kind, namely, to reject all improvements by at once condemning them as innovations; to suppress grievances rather than encounter them, if unfounded, with argument, or seek, if well-founded, to remove them.

The spirit of the old Toryism that, to the last, struggled against Parliamentary Reform, the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Roman Catholic Emancipation, and the Abolition of the Corn Laws, still survives. It speaks through those who have, in the present Parliament, denounced Reform as revolution—free intercourse with France as the ruin of the country: who uphold a paltry rate as the bond of union betwixt Church and State; tests for academical degrees and municipal offices as the palladia of the Universities and the Establishment. It inspires the faction, whose language in regard to Poland, to Denmark, and upon

all American questions, recalls the traditionary war-policy which made the greatness of the Tory party in the early part of the century. It animates those who continue the champions of particular interests, and the advocates of class-legislation, regardless of the higher consideration of national good: those who still prefer monopoly in commerce, intolerance in religion, and exclusion in politics, to union between nations, goodwill between creeds, and harmony between classes. Is it to such men and to such a party that the conduct and settlement of the questions now before the country, and which this Parliament will have left unsettled, can be satisfactorily intrusted?

England, by example and by precept, is gradually impressing upon foreign nations the wisdom of freedom in trade. If she would multiply her converts, she must show to the world that she does not withdraw her confidence from those who launched her in that course. In the unsettled state of Europe, it should be apparent to other countries that England will not relapse into the old Tory policy of fellowship with the despots, and antagonism to liberty on the Continent. She should maintain that friendship with France, founded on mutual respect, with which the name of Lord Palmerston will ever be honourably associated. Without committing herself to theories of intervention or of non-intervention, she should

hold herself free to act, or not to act, at any conjuncture, as her interests and her dignity may require. In the East there is also a distinct policy to be pursued. We have to uphold our treaty-rights and to protect our commerce, without permitting China or Japan to become another India in the hands of foreign adventurers or of an English Government. The relations of the Colonies to the Mother-country, and those of the Colonies to each other, remain to be determined. At home we have still to apply to land and to labour that freedom which has worked such marvels in the case of capital and of commerce. We have to solve the problem of admitting the more intelligent of the unenfranchised classes to a share in the representation, without giving to numbers an undue preponderance over property and education. We have to reconcile the maintenance of an Established Church with the removal, not merely of civil disabilities, but of the stigma of civil inferiority, from those who dissent. The vexed question of church-rates calls for a settlement: that of religious tests admits not of neglect. The day for ambitious budgets is said to have passed away, yet there are triumphs to be won by a bold Chancellor of the Exchequer; but the income-tax and the malt-duty are adversaries not to be grappled with by pigmies, but by a giant of finance. The anomalies and inequalities of our

local taxation stand in need of further correction; a system of representative government, such as is enjoyed by the inhabitants of towns, has yet to be extended to the ratepayers in counties. The numerous and complicated laws relating to the poor, to registration, to elections, to roads, to patents, to a variety of domestic subjects, require revision and consolidation. These last are laborious tasks, little tempting to the vanity of men who have a personal reputation yet to make; above all, they are tasks requiring that moral courage which, for an object of general benefit, does not shrink from encountering the momentary obloquy that attaches to those who attack rooted abuses.

The Conservatives are in this dilemma that, if they remain true to their own principles, they cannot work out the more important of these problems to a satisfactory solution. If they sacrifice their principles, they will only carry out a Liberal policy with a worse grace and less weight than its authors.

On what grounds, then, can the Rump claim that power should be taken from its present holders and transferred to itself? There is nothing in the past it can claim with pride—nothing it can point to with hope in the future: in the present it is drifting without a principle, a policy, or a cry. The demoralising effect of this collapse of Toryism shows itself in the frequent abjuration by

Tory candidates of all the words and deeds of their party during the last fifty years, in their vehement approbation of past Liberal measures, and in their more or less ambiguous promises of adherence to them in future. 'Hypocrisy,' says Rochefoucauld, 'is the homage that vice pays to virtue;' in the same way these professions may be accepted as the tribute Toryism renders to the wisdom and soundness of a liberal policy. Let Liberal electors, however, beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, and scrutinise the antecedents and associates of men whose conversion will be found suspiciously coincident with their immediate interest.

No recognition of the success of a Liberal policy forms any part of the platform constructed by the Tory leader for his party, and upon which he has taken his stand in addressing his Buckinghamshire constituents. He sees in the acts of a Government and of a party under which the country is prosperous and the people contented, nothing but a 'continued attack upon the British Constitution in Church and State.' We have, in our previous observations upon Parliamentary Reform, shown how Mr. Disraeli has discovered in the second reading without opposition of Lord Russell's Reform Bill, and in the refusal of the House to pronounce an opinion upon the specific propositions submitted by Mr. Locke King and Mr. Baines, not only the defeat

by the Conservative opposition of a Ministerial measure, and a direct affirmation that the franchise in boroughs should not be lowered, but further still, that the principle on which Lord Derby wished to extend that franchise was the just one. More wonderfully still, it is claimed for the Opposition that it has defeated that measure for the abolition of church-rates to which the present Government 'was pledged,' and which 'it was formed to carry,' and that the Conservatives have induced the House to 'resolve that church-rates shall not be abolished.'* One is tempted to

* The Government Reform Bill was read a second time *nem. con.* in the Session of 1860, and subsequently withdrawn. Mr. White's motion in the following year that the Government was called upon to introduce another measure for the extension of the suffrage in counties and in boroughs was negatived on a division. Mr. Locke King's and Mr. Baines's Bills, to the latter of which the member for Bucks more particularly refers, have never been met with a direct negative. Lord Derby's scheme has not been submitted to the present Parliament, which, however, since it ejected the Government that proposed it, can scarcely be supposed to have looked upon that proposition with any great degree of favour.

As to church-rates it is notorious that with the present Administration the subject has from the first been an open question, and that accordingly several of its members have opposed Sir John Trelawny's measure. The resolution moved by Mr. Estcourt in May 1862, and carried by a majority of seventeen (which we presume to be the one alluded to in the manifesto), affirmed that church-rates ought not to be abolished '*until* some other provision should have been made by Parliament for, the discharge of the obligations to which, by custom or statute

imagine that Mr. Disraeli when he framed his extraordinary manifesto must have been in the position of the Eastern Fakir, who, having fallen upon his head, and unconsciously remained in that attitude, looked upon every object in nature as inverted, and criticised and carped at it from his own abnormal point of view. No doubt, however, we shall hear much at the hustings, of the mission of the great Conservative party to save the Church and to stem the tide of Democracy: to preserve the integrity of the Constitution, and, in some instances, to do justice to the agricultural interest.

Let us briefly examine the claims of the Conservatives to the confidence of electors on each of these different grounds.

We will give precedence to the last. To palliate the abandonment of Protection, the Derby-Disraeli Government in 1852 proposed a reduction of the malt-duty, coupled, however, with an extension and increase of the house-tax, which being manifestly impracticable afforded a ready excuse for at once abandoning the scheme. In 1858 the same Government passed over the claims of its agricultural dupes in contemptuous silence. From that day to this the farmers have had scant cause

the churchwardens on the part of the parish are liable.' Its terms, therefore, contemplate the abolition of church-rates, and to imply a condemnation of the 'constitutional privilege of the Church' as a permanent tax.

to be grateful to their so-styled friends. Mr. Disraeli's hostile course in regard to the hop-duty in 1861, defeated the motion for repeal, and it remained for Mr. Gladstone, of his own free will, to surrender the tax, as he gracefully did, in the following year. The half-hearted votes and the deliberate count-out on the malt-duty in the two last Sessions, the preference successfully evinced by the Conservative party for the reduction or removal of the duties on paper, on tea, on sugar, and on fire insurance, the inaction observed on this year's budget, conclusively prove that, however much Conservative members may amuse their country friends with political thimble-rig, repeal of the malt-duty is a pea which will be found under none of their thimbles.

The desire to substitute a pure Democracy for our mixed Constitution, attributed to men who have obviously as great an interest in preserving the stability of our institutions as the Rump can claim, is a vulgar claptrap, disgraceful to those who resort to it, and too contemptible to deserve refutation. In this, as in many other matters, the Liberals have proved the true Conservatives. The Constitution rests at the present time on a broader basis, is more popular and more secure than forty years ago, when the Tories had succeeded in arresting all progress. This result is due to a succession of wise and just measures which the Con-

servatives denounced as pernicious, and opposed to the utmost of their power. Time has, in every instance, proved their judgment unsound, and falsified their predictions. In fact, they stand, at the present time, convicted of error, by their own praise of the existing condition of things and indignant disclaimer of any wish or intention to retrace a single step. More commonly 'the inroads of Democracy' and similar hustings phrases, are employed by Tory orators to denote the growth of interests in the country other than those of the landed gentry and aristocracy, which newer interests, becoming not less wealthy and intelligent than the older, claim their due position and influence in the country. The danger of Democracy, in the mouths of speakers of this description at other times, means no more than the advance of the masses of the population in well-being and education, and their consequent title to a recognition of this fact by the more favoured classes. In these senses the growth of Democracy is a natural result of the prosperity of the country, and the Conservatives might as well undertake, with Canute of old, to suspend a law of nature and arrest the waves in their courses, as this necessary and wholesome progress.

The cry of 'the Church in danger,' like that of 'Wolf' in the fable, has been too often raised without cause to alarm the most timid. If there

ever was a time when that cry was palpably absurd it is the present. The Church is represented as in danger at a time when she is by her own energy and zeal year by year enlarging the sphere of her utility, extending her legitimate influence, and acquiring a well-deserved popularity among classes from whom she has been too long estranged. That the Church has open and avowed enemies, is not denied; these, however, she is amply strong enough to resist: indeed, there are probably few institutions in the world more firmly rooted than the Church Establishment in England. Her greatest danger arises from those false or mistaken friends who would have her abdicate her national character to become the slave of politicians; who prompt her needlessly and offensively to flaunt her supremacy in the face of her rivals; who would teach her to trust, not to her historical position, and her hold upon the heart and the intelligence of the country, but to the patronage of a party, and the efforts of the Conservative whipper-in.

Let those, however, who really apprehend dangers in Church and in State, reflect what security they have that the institutions for which they tremble would be safer in Conservative than in Liberal hands, if the Conservatives should once more be installed in office. If Conservative candidates be found willing to abjure Conservatism in

words in order to gain votes, Conservative members have been found ready to sacrifice it in deed that they might purchase a precarious tenure of power. The motto of the Rump when in office might indeed not inappropriately, from its own point of view, be,

> Video meliora proboque,
> Deteriora sequor.

In 1852 it repudiated all the cries upon which it had traded while in opposition. It threw over protection to agriculture, to the West Indies, to the shipping interest, and merely mocked its victims with the shadowy pretence of a 'Revision of burdens.' Again, in 1858, having previously denounced the removal of the property qualification for members of Parliament as a revolutionary measure, it became the instrument of carrying its abolition. Having with sanctimonious oratory denounced the admission of Jews to the House of Commons as subversive of the Church and the Christianity of the country, it suggested and connived at their admission. It not only abandoned the principle of resistance to Reform, but itself proposed a 10*l.* qualification for county-voters, and the removal of that distinction between the county and borough franchise, which its chief had only a few years before declared to be 'one of the main balances of the Constitution.' Nay, more, its leaders did

not shrink from proposing the overthrow of the Church and of the Constitution by the very weapons from which they now profess it their mission to defend them. Conservatives in opposition, they proved Destructives in office, till simple-minded Tory electors began to ask whether their members did not preserve our institutions as country gentlemen do their game, in order themselves to enjoy the exclusive privilege of destroying them. Two successive Secretaries of State under Lord Derby, Mr. Walpole and Mr. Sothern Estcourt, made propositions which surrendered both the principles which those who uphold the law of church-rates in its integrity affect to find involved in it, namely, the union of Church and State, and the right of parochial taxation. Had not the just pride of the Nonconformists scorned the proffered boon owing to the contumely with which it was offered, and the degradation with which it was accompanied, Dissent might at this time have been in the enjoyment of the kernel, the Church retaining only the husk.

Nor let it be forgotten by those who live, or who affect to live, in abject terror of a lower borough franchise, that at the meeting of the present Parliament, in his last bid to retain office, Mr. Disraeli, speaking as the organ of his Govern-

ment and his party, pledged himself to what he now terms 'the degradation of the suffrage.' We quote his very words, on June 7, 1859.

'We are perfectly prepared to deal with that question of the borough franchise and the introduction of the working classes by lowering the franchise in boroughs, and by acting in that direction with sincerity; because, as I ventured to observe in the debate upon our measure, if you intend to admit the working classes to the franchise by lowering the suffrage in boroughs, you must not keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope.'

Since the Conservatives have been driven from power, the old instincts to preserve the *status quo* and to bar progress have resumed their sway, and the escapades of the leaders when in office have been as far as possible buried in oblivion. But even in opposition, the want of principle, the absence of definite views, the lack of a policy, has led them into glaring contradictions that throw doubts on their steadfastness, if once more exposed to the temptations of power. Thus in the present Parliament they have been found ever ready to grasp at anything that promised a momentary popularity. Having first with their own hands strangled the paper-duty, they repudiated the deed, and vainly sought to galvanise the corpse into life. Having, in 1861, denied

the existence of a surplus, they within a fortnight urged the reduction of the tea-duty by an amount equal to the surplus, the very possibility of which they had refused to admit. At the commencement of a Session they urged as a sacred obligation a protest in favour of Poland; before its close they condemned the very remonstrance they had insisted upon. So long as the Danes had a chance of success they remained silent; when the Danish cause had become hopeless they complained that England had not plunged into war; they have cried out for greater armaments by land and by sea, for more fortifications at home and abroad, while almost with the same breath inveighing against our 'bloated armaments,' and our military expenditure. They have been the 'friends' of the most varied interests, in contradistinction to the advantage of the community at large; thus they have been, with what benefit to their *protégés* we will not say, in turns the champions of the silk-manufacturers, of the riband-weavers, of those last of Protectionists, the paper-makers, of the builders, of Confederate cruisers. No matter what class, or what cause, stood in need of a champion, the leaders of the Rump have been found in the market like mercenaries without a faith, a country, or a principle, ready to fight for pay or plunder, or from mere wanton caprice.

The manifold tergiversations of the past, the manifold inconsistencies of the present, the oracular silence or the studied ambiguities as to the future, show the absence of a living faith among the Conservative party. Conservatism in its present phase is a monster at once of political bigotry and of political infidelity, blindly following old instincts and traditions, but only so long as no selfish advantage tempts it to deviate from the straight course.

In conclusion, the two parties will shortly stand on their trial before the country, which will be called upon to decide on what principles it will be governed for the duration of another Parliament. It will have to elect between national vitality and national lethargy, between progress and stagnation, toleration and intolerance, freedom and restriction, between reason and blind adherence to tradition, between peace with honour or war from every impulse of passion or of sentiment. It will have to decide between a party under whose lengthened rule the Empire has been prosperous, happy, and loyal, and a party who have laboured to thwart at every step the policy by which those results have been achieved; above all, it will have to decide between a party true to its creed, and which can consistently maintain and extend the blessings of which that creed has been fruitful,

and men of whom the nation could at best hope that the vice of their political principles might be neutralised by the laxity of their political morality.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE